



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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**SUBJECT: Thank you for participating in Public Hearings – Public input
Invaluable to Process**

MADISON, Wis. – Last summer more than 1,200 citizens sacrificed an evening to attend public hearings vital to preserving the Wisconsin they grew up knowing and loving. Thanks to everyone who took the time to become involved in this process through the public comment period and 11 public hearings held around the state. Updating the state's 35-year-old rules to preserve clean water, great fishing, and natural scenic beauty along Wisconsin's lakes and rivers is challenging and controversial—and absolutely essential. We want to make sure we get the rules right, and your comments will go a long way in helping achieve that goal.

It was very clear from the comments heard that Wisconsin's 15,000 lakes and thousands of streams are the heart and soul of the Badger state, a wellspring of favorite memories for waterfront property owners and others alike. People also described these waters as a linchpin of Wisconsin's economic future: a powerful reason to keep people and businesses here, important amenities we can offer prospective businesses and residents, and an anchor of the state's \$12 billion tourism industry.

DNR shoreland protection staff launched the revision process in 2002 by convening a citizens' advisory committee to look at the current rules, which set statewide minimum standards (in largely unincorporated areas) for lot sizes, building setbacks and limits on removing shoreland vegetation. The proposed changes debated at public hearings reflect nearly three years of advisory committee meetings and hundreds of phone calls, e-mails and comments by the public.

The changes sought to strike the proper balance between providing property owners more flexibility in what they could do on their land in exchange for measures to offset the resulting impacts on lakes and rivers.

Over 12,000 comments have been received on the proposed revision to NR 115. After reviewing and compiling the comments, the Department will make changes to the rule proposal based on the comments heard during the comment period and public hearings. The final draft of the rule will then be taken to our Natural Resources Board for final consideration.

Due to the high volume of comments, it is unclear when the rule will be brought to the Board for approval and the specific changes that will be made to the proposal, but one thing is certain, the final proposed rules will look different, and considerably different, in some cases, than the ones featured at the public hearings.

We listened, and we will act.